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MATTINGLY, STANGER, MALUR & BRUNDIDGE, P.C. 1800 DIAGONAL ROAD SUITE 370 ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			GILLIGAN, CHRISTOPHER L	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3626	

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 11/14/05 has been entered.

Response to Amendment

2. In the amendment filed 9/28/05, the following has occurred: claims 1, 3-5, and 8-11 have been amended. Now, claims 1-6 and 8-11 are presented for examination.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. Claims 1-6 and 8-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

(A) Claim 1 has been amended to include the phrase "a logical resource for each service attribute is kept independent from physical resource identifiers in execution of services to be provided." It is unclear what the scope of "kept independent" is intended to encompass. It is unclear if this phrase is intended to indicate that "a logical resource" is stored in a different storage medium from "physical resource identifiers," if it merely indicates that there is a corresponding "physical resource identifier" for each logical resource, etc. For examination

Art Unit: 3626

purposes, the Examiner will interpret this limitation as each service attribute having a resource identifier.

(B) Independent claims 3 and 8-11 have been amended in a similar fashion and are, therefore, rejected for the same reasons as claim 1.

(C) Claims 2 and 4-6 contain the same deficiencies as claim 1 through dependency and are, therefore, rejected for the same reasons.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 1, 6, 8, and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Campbell et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,918,209 in view of Okawa, U.S. Patent No. 5,933,810.

(A) As per claim 8, Campbell teaches a service reservation method that accepts requests from users for reservations utilizing services for utilizing services supplied by using resources (Campbell; col. 8, lines 22-25), comprising;

a) accepting service reservation booking requests from users (Campbell; col. 6, lines 42-50 and col. 8, lines 22-25);

b) determining the marginal value (i.e., degree of importance) of the accepted booking request in accordance with the preset specifications (Campbell; col. 7, line 27 to col. 8, line 2);
and

c) denying the acceptance of the reservation request if the marginal value (i.e., degree of importance) of the request is lower than a net revenue (i.e., predetermined standard), and accepting the reservation request if the marginal value (i.e., degree of importance) of the request is not lower than the net revenue (i.e., predetermined standard), (Campbell; Figure 2B, col. 1, lines 15-25, col. 8, lines 20-40), during a period when the demand (81,85) (i.e., load level) is higher than a predetermined level (Campbell; Figures, 7A-7B, col. 1, lines 50-56).

d) allotting an element adapted to select a combination among combinations of the resources which includes data accumulation resources, data transmission resources and data processing resources to allot resources which constitute the combination thus selected to the reservation of the service whose reservation was taken (see column 6, lines 15-34), wherein said data transmission resources are adapted to supply transmission and exchange services to the users (see column 6, lines 35-41), wherein said data processing resources are adapted to supply the users with information processing services via the transmission and exchange service, and wherein said data accumulation resources are adapted to supply the users with information accumulating service via the transmission and exchange service (see column 6, lines 35-41).

e) wherein a service attribute has a resource identifier and based on the service attribute, the said system determines and reserves candidate identifiers of physical resources and an amount of use that is necessary to provide the service (see column 8, lines 24-35).

Campbell does not explicitly teach the degree of importance is determined in accordance with at least one of attributes of the users, status information of the services including load level and social factors and attributes of the services. Okawa teaches determining a degree of importance in accordance with at least one of attributes of users, status information of services including load level and social factors and attributes of the services (see

Art Unit: 3626

column 5, line 60 – column 6, line 5 and Figure 3). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of reservation management to substitute this method of determining a degree of importance for a particular reservation request into the method of Campbell. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to substitute this technique for the purpose of improving efficiency by automatically making arrangements when duplicate reservations are received (see column 2, lines 1-9 of Okawa).

(B) System claim 1 differs from claim 8, in that claim 8 contains a method recited as a series of function steps whereas claim 1 contains features recited in a “means plus function” format. As the method of step claim 8 has been shown to be disclosed by the teachings of Campbell and Okawa, it is readily apparent that the “means” to accomplish those method steps is obvious in view of the prior art. As such, the limitations recited in claim 1 are rejected for the same reasons given for method claim 8 and incorporated herein.

(C) As per claim 6, Campbell in view of Okawa teach the system supplies services according to the accepted reservation using a digital network that transmits information and reservations between users and the system (Campbell; Figures 2A-2B and col. 6, lines 10-60).

(D) Article of Manufacture claim 10 differs from claim 8, in that claim 8 contains a method recited as a series of function steps whereas claim 10 contains features recited in a “means plus function” format. As the method of step claim 8 has been shown to be disclosed by the teachings of Campbell and Okawa, it is readily apparent that the “means” to accomplish those method steps is obvious in view of the prior art. As such, the limitations recited in claim 10 are rejected for the same reasons given for method claim 8 and incorporated herein.

7. Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Campbell et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,918,209 in view of Okawa, U.S. Patent No. 5,933,810 and further in view of Official Notice.

(A) As per claim 2, Campbell in view of Okawa teach the system of claim 1 as described above. Campbell further teaches a service reservation system where the predetermined standard in which the marginal value (i.e., predetermined importance degree) is a function of, and increases linearly with, the demand curve (i.e., load level) (Campbell; Figure 11A and col. 11, line 22 to col. 13, line 21). It is unclear in Campbell whether the linear relationship of the demand curve to the marginal value is simple proportional relationship. However, it is common practice in the perishable goods industry to create a directly proportional relationship between demand (i.e., load level) and marginal value (i.e., importance degree) for the purposes of estimating materialization and revenue. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to include a proportional relationship in the linear relationship of demand to marginal value of Campbell with the motivation of "maximizing profitability in the face of uncertain demand" (Campbell; col. 1, lines 24-25).

8. Claims 3-5, 9, 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Campbell in view of Okawa as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Lynch et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,119,094.

Art Unit: 3626

(A) As per claim 9, Campbell teaches a service reservation taking method for receiving reservations from users for utilizing services supplied by using resources (Campbell; col. 8, lines 22-25), comprising:

a) accepting service reservation booking requests from users (Campbell; col. 8, lines 22-25 and col. 6, lines 42-50);

b) increasing the utilization efficiency of each reservation (Campbell; col. 1, lines 15-25)

c) wherein said resources include a transmission and exchange network adapted to supply transmission and exchange service to the users, and a data processing unit adapted to supply the users with information processing and accumulating services via said transmission and exchange network (see Figure 2A). However, Campbell does not expressly disclose the preparation of a substitute reservation plan including altering the contents of the reservation in the request so that resource utilization efficiency of the request is increased. Nor does Campbell teach the presenting, accepting, or booking of the substitute plan as in items d, e, and f, respectively below.

d) presenting the substitute reservation plan to the user (Lynch; Figure 4, col. 8, lines 55-60);

e) accepting the user's selection of one of the substitute plans (Lynch; col. 8, lines 60-65); and

f) booking the substitute plan (Lynch; col. 8, lines 60-65).

g) wherein a service attribute has a resource identifier and based on the service attribute, the said system determines and reserves candidate identifiers of physical resources and an amount of use that is necessary to provide the service (see column 8, lines 24-35).

Lynch teaches preparing a substitute plan (16) by altering at least one condition-variable among condition-variables of a resource search condition equation which constitutes the

Art Unit: 3626

content of reservation in the reservation booking requests accepted by the first acceptance element (Lynch; Figure 1 and col. 3, lines 40-65). It would have been obvious to include the substitute plan preparing, presenting, accepting and booking of Lynch in the efficiency seeking method of Campbell with the motivation of identifying "a plurality of alternate low-cost travel arrangements that may be offered or recommended to a customer submitting a travel request" (Lynch; col. 1, line 67 to col. 2, line 2).

Additionally, Campbell does not explicitly teach the degree of importance is determined in accordance with at least one of attributes of the users, status information of the services including load level and social factors and attributes of the services. Okawa teaches determining a degree of importance in accordance with at least one of attributes of users, status information of services including load level and social factors and attributes of the services (see column 5, line 60 – column 6, line 5 and Figure 3). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of reservation management to substitute this method of determining a degree of importance for a particular reservation request into the method of Campbell. One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to substitute this technique for the purpose of improving efficiency by automatically making arrangements when duplicate reservations are received (see column 2, lines 1-9 of Okawa).

(B) Claim 3 differs from claim 9 in the recitation of "a reservation condition management element adapted to manage accepted reservation of services as reservation condition." Campbell teaches a reservation system management element adapted to manage accepted reservations (Campbell; col. 8, lines 20-40 and col. 6, lines 10-55). The remainder of system claim 3 differs from claim 9, in that claim 9 contains a method recited as a series of function steps whereas claim 3 contains features recited in a "means plus function" format. As the

Art Unit: 3626

method of step claim B has been shown to be disclosed or obvious by the combined teachings of Campbell, Okawa, and Lynch it is readily apparent that the “means” to accomplish those method steps is obvious in view of the prior art. As such, the limitations recited in claim 3 are rejected for the same reasons given for method claim 9 and incorporated herein.

(C) As per claims 4-5, Campbell in view of Okawa and Lynch teach the system of claim 3 as described above. Campbell further teaches the denial and allowance of the accepted reservation and the increase of resource utilization efficiency of the requested reservation (Campbell; Figure 2B and col. 1, lines 15-25). However, Campbell fails to teach a substitute plan preparation element that prepares a substitute reservation by altering the contents of the reservation request. Lynch teaches preparing a substitute plan (16) in which the contents of the original request is altered (Lynch; Figure 1 and col. 3, lines 40-65). It would have been obvious to include the substitute plan preparing, presenting, accepting and booking of Lynch in the efficiency seeking method of Campbell with the motivation of identifying “a plurality of alternate low-cost travel arrangements that may be offered or recommended to a customer submitting a travel request” (Lynch; col. 1, line 67 to col. 2, line 2).

(D) Article of Manufacture claim 11 differs from claim 9, in that claim 9 contains a method recited as a series of function steps whereas claim 11 contains features recited in a “means plus function” format. As the method of step claim 9 has been shown to be disclosed or obvious by the combined teachings of Campbell, Okawa, and Lynch, it is readily apparent that the “means” to accomplish those method steps is obvious in view of the prior art. As such, the limitations recited in claim 11 are rejected for the same reasons given for method claim 9 and incorporated herein.

Response to Arguments

9. In the remarks filed 9/28/05, Applicants argue in substance that (1) the combination of applied prior art fails to teach the newly added limitations to more clearly reflect the invention as illustrated in Figure 7; (2) Okawa fails to teach adjusting the number or resources to be used for providing services in accordance with load status; (3) the combination of Campbell and Okawa fail to teach an importance degree determining element as recited; (4) the combination of Campbell and Okawa fail to teach a reservation taking element as recited; (5) the combination of Campbell and Okawa fail to teach a service resource allotting element as recited.

10. In response to Applicants' argument (1), as described above, it is unclear what is meant by certain portions of the newly added limitations. However, to the extent that the Examiner understands the limitation and has interpreted it accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Campbell teaches such a feature of determining resources and an amount of use necessary to provide services as described above in the rejections.

11. In response to Applicants' argument (2), it is respectfully submitted that Okawa has only been relied upon for the claimed feature of determining a degree of importance of the service booking requests, not for any feature of adjusting the number of resources. Furthermore, it is unclear what limitation recited in the claims Applicant is relying on for a step or element of adjusting the number or resources to be used for providing the services. Therefore, this argument is not found to be persuasive in view of the limitations currently recited in the claims.

12. In response to Applicants' argument (3), the Examiner maintains that Campbell does teach a form of degree of importance as described above in the rejections. However, the Examiner has also acknowledged that Campbell does not explicitly teach a degree of importance as a function of the recited "attributes of the users, status information of the services

Art Unit: 3626

including load level and social factors and attributes of the service". The Examiner has relied upon the teachings of Okawa in combination with Campbell to teach this element of the claim. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of Campbell and Okawa teaches this feature as recited in the claims.

13. Applicant's arguments (4) and (5) fail to comply with 37 CFR 1.111(b) because they amount to a general allegation that the claims define a patentable invention without specifically pointing out how the language of the claims patentably distinguishes them from the references. Therefore, the Examiner respectfully refers the rejections detailed above in response to these arguments.

Conclusion

14. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Luke Gilligan whose telephone number is (571) 272-6770. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 8am-5:30pm.

15. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Joseph Thomas can be reached on (571) 272-6776. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

16. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Application/Control Number: 09/635,630

Page 12

Art Unit: 3626

1/23/06



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PATENT EXAMINER